

Iyashikei 691

Chapter 691: The City

691 The City

When Han Fei's blood fell on the hilt, the souls trapped inside roared! The arms reached out to grab Rest in Peace with Han Fei. The blade made by humanity pierced through Malice. The nightmare dissipated, and curses rampaged. Han Fei was like the scariest ghost in the dark, but he also held the brightest light in the city.

Han Fei's shoulder was injured by the female student, and his chest was hit by Fu Sheng. Han Fei didn't care. He wouldn't let go of the knife again.

"Do you think you are worthy of this knife?" Han Fei's red eyes looked at F's eyes under the mask. The black box owners of different eras glared at each other.

The wails in Rest in Peace turned into roars. When Han Fei held that knife, everyone present inside the hilt seemed to find the reason for their existence. They were there to protect the last torch in the winter, to bring all the souls out of the cryptic world, to bring them to see the tomorrow that had never appeared in their future.

This blade was not a black blade used to trap Malice. It was a blade that even F wanted to claim as his own. It was Han Fei's blade!

Just like how it was at the meat-packing factory, the beauty of humanity's soul stood together with Han Fei. They were fearless and would continue to press forward even if it meant their death. Humanity wasn't sharp, but they were willing to turn into the blade for Han Fei.

With the roars of every beautiful soul inside the hilt, the warm blade cut through Malice's waist!

Fu Sheng's hands couldn't stop these souls. The butcher knife had started to go out of control. After killing Malice, the souls turned backward. F knew he couldn't hold onto Rest in Peace. He immediately abandoned it and chose to unite with the black Malice.

The brilliant light slashed through F's mask. The blade finally stopped on the female student's neck. Even after 99 deaths, Han Fei didn't want to kill the girl. He was not a murderer, neither was his blade.

"The girl loves you so much, but you turned her into something like this? It looks like the changes I made inside the last altar are just illusions. This is the ice-cold truth." Han Fei took a deep breath. "I know the things you've once experienced. I can guess why you turn out like this, and I know what to do now."

He raised his blade at F.

"You represent the past. No matter what I do in the altar world, it can't change your personality. Then, those horrible memories should be buried. Leave the future to me. I can't guarantee that I can be the best, but I should be better than you."

F, who united with Malice, stopped not far away. His bones cracked, and his body kept shifting, but he didn't seem to feel the pain. F looked at Han Fei silently until the white mask cracked.

It was a handsome face under the mask. His skin was abnormally pale. Perhaps it was because he had been consuming medicine nonstop.

"Is this how you looked like when you were my age?" This was the first time Han Fei saw Fu Sheng like this. The face under the mask was very young, about 20 plus. "Actually, I don't get it. The girl accompanies you daily. When you were tortured by the people at school, the girl accompanied you unconditionally. Why would you have the heart to turn her into something like this? Don't you... know that she likes you?"

The white mask fell to the ground and shattered into pieces.

"I can see the future. If I don't separate the cryptic world, the whole city will be assimilated." F allowed the ghost to consume his body. His voice was still calm. "The human world will become hell. The days will become shorter and the nights longer. Everyone will die in madness, and death will become common."

"Is that why you chose to destroy the path to the cryptic world?"

"I will become the theme park's new manager. After the separation, I will enter the other world alone and destroy it." F was like a young medical intern, and he wanted to save everyone on his own.

"No wonder no one in the living world remembers you. You've sealed yourself up in the cryptic world."

"That's right. That is what I need to do." Most of F's body had been consumed by the ghost, but he still retained his rationality. This appeared to be his trump card. "You asked me about the train earlier, but you got one thing wrong. I never wanted to sacrifice anyone because I was on the tracks too. I wasn't the train driver, and I couldn't control fate! The choice I had to make was whether to save the endless people on the left track or the few of us on the right."

Malice munched on F's heart. His face slowly resembled F. "Soon, you'll see. With Dream's ritual, the cryptic world will overlap with this city. If you can insist on your choice after seeing all the tragedies, then I have nothing to say."

"I get it now. You want to use this method to let me see the consequence of not separating the cryptic world, right?" Han Fei's stance was different from Fu Sheng's. He had opened both sides of the black box. That was both murder and salvation. A person like that could open a new path and channel all the accumulated despair into the human world.

"Do not risk it with everyone's future. Between the real world and the cryptic world, one is destined to be ruined. Even the Unmentionables can't take on both worlds at the same time." The black Malice slithered on F's neck. Just as it was about to consume F fully, F pressed on his heart. Malice seemed to feel something. It crawled back into F's body unwillingly. After he left behind the last warning, he stared at Han Fei for a long time before he also retreated. Using his body to feed the ghost was a bad idea, and it had many severe consequences, so he had to leave as soon as possible. He was no match for Han Fei and Xu Qin currently. After possessing that butcher's knife, he knew how powerful it was.

When Fu Sheng departed, the female student instantly disappeared. Part of the players, including Thousand Nights, left with F. F still had some charm. F wanted to kill Han Fei before he could reach Stage Eight, but he was too late. The plan had failed.

"Shall we give chase?" Qiang Wei climbed up from the ground. "Is that man really a player? How come I have no impression of his face at all?"

“Never mind.” Han Fei’s curses faded away. He hugged the paper doll and inspected its body. The cracks in the eyes multiplied. Xu Qin couldn’t use her power that often. She had died 99 times with Han Fei. She only had her curses left. If the power of the curses was exhausted, Xu Qin might perish too.

Actually, both Han Fei and F were pushing it. They were both at their limits already.

“I’ve already taken back the thing I want. We’ll slowly start to regain the upper hand.” Han Fei glanced at the chaotic neighborhood. The nightmare had spread. He didn’t know how to handle this. He decided to wait for dawn.

Han Fei examined everyone’s wounds in Room 444. “The Malice uncontrollable by the theme park can provide some hatred for Xu Qin to help her recover. Dream has planted black cocoons in living humans for his resurrection ritual. The thing inside the cocoons can be absorbed by the cat.” Han Fei picked the cat up and carefully observed the tattoo on it. The pattern was very similar to the pattern on Big Sin. “Why would my ghost tattoo turn into a cat?”

“Han Fei, do we need to save the people downstairs?” Qiang Wei asked uncertainly, “A quarter of the city’s police force is here. If something happened to them, I don’t think we can handle the chaos tomorrow on our own.”

“The chaos tomorrow?” Han Fei turned to look at Qiang Wei.

“F saw the future. Someone inside the theme park wanted to seal up the cryptic world. The ghosts will initiate their last resistance. Tonight is the turning point,” Qiang Wei was only second to F among the players. He found out many things from F too.

“You all know that I have a good relationship with the police. Isn’t it normal for me to go and save them?” Han Fei walked down the stairs with Rest in Peace. The other players followed.

Han Fei walked into the victims’ nightmare. He was the source of the nightmare, but he pulled these people out like he was the savior. Perhaps many people still saw him as a fugitive, but at least it sowed some doubts in the police who had been saved by him.

“Han Fei, I’m here!” Xiao Jia, who was hiding under the car, waved at Han Fei. “I managed to delay the police using my driving skills. But the taxi came alive on its own and drove to find you. I couldn’t stop it! I didn’t mean to bring the police here!”

“Thank you for everything.” Han Fei dragged Xiao Jia out from under the taxi. While they aided the police, they didn’t forget to deal with the monsters hiding inside the family compound. Chaos was descending upon the city. They needed to improve themselves as soon as possible.

“I wonder how the city will become after dawn that someone like Fu Sheng would choose to destroy it...”

While Han Fei pondered that, strange phenomena started to happen at different corners of the city.

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“Husband, why is the sun still so dark when it’s already 7 pm? But the weather forecast did say it’ll rain tonight.” A woman turned around in bed. She noticed her husband was not in the bedroom. The crib was also empty. “Where are they?” She got out of bed with her tired body. She opened the bedroom door and looked out. Her husband’s theme park uniform was left on the couch. She could hear her baby crying.

“Husband, where are you?” Following the crying, the woman slowly pushed open the bathroom door. She saw her husband in a new theme park uniform, squatting inside the bathtub, facing away from her.

“What are you doing?”

“The chaos is coming. Ghosts might appear anywhere. Nowhere is safe! We need to be prepared!” The husband’s voice was mixed with the baby’s crying. “Do we need to prepare some supplies?”

“No. I hear babies can see things adults can’t...” The husband turned around. His bleeding eye sockets had two small eyeballs inside them. “Our home is temporarily safe.”

The scream made a male student passing by look up. "Domestic violence? Shall I call the police?" While he hesitated, he saw his classmate snuck out of the nearby alley. He tossed something inside the trash can.

"Brother Gou, why are you here so early in the morning? I remember your house is on the northern side." The student waved at his friend. "It's about to rain. Do you want to share my umbrella?"

"You're my best buddy, so I'll tell you a secret. Don't tell anyone else." Brother Gou said mysteriously, "Yesterday, our class belle said that her dog was very annoying. It liked to lick her hands and face at night."

"So what?"

"Haha." Brother Gou laughed and ran out of the alley. Blood was stuck to the bottom of his pants. The male student was confused. He walked to the trash can and opened the black plastic dumped by Brother Gou. It was a dismembered dog inside. "How disgusting!" The student felt like vomiting. He quickly moved away. "Why is everyone acting strangely today? Mom is cooking meat stew early in the morning. When I asked her whether I should go and wake up Dad, she said Dad was already there. Now, my classmate is going around killing dogs. Has something gone wrong with the world?"

The male student couldn't get it. He was about to leave when the sky started to rain. The student opened the umbrella. He took a few steps when he bumped into a thin man holding a red umbrella. The rim had completely covered the man's face.

"I'm sorry for bumping into you." The student walked past the man. "When did the man appear?"

Out of curiosity, the student tried to look under the man's umbrella. When he saw the face, he was stunned. The man with the red umbrella had no face!

The male student's heart pounded. He started to run. However, no matter how fast he was, the man in the red umbrella would constantly appear around him.

"What is that thing? Why is it following me?"

After some time, the student finally shook the man off. He held his umbrella and looked carefully around. The man in the red umbrella was indeed gone.

His heart relaxed. He was about to take a breather when he felt something drip on his head.

“Huh? Why is there rain under the umbrella?” The student raised his head, and he found a bleeding man’s face hidden inside his umbrella.

“Have you seen me?”

Chapter 692: Old Friend

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The male student looked at the human face under the umbrella. The man’s blood slid down his eyes and dropped on the student’s head. The eyeballs also loosened.

“The man’s face... is under my umbrella?” The male student screamed as he tossed the umbrella to the ground. The rain drenched his hair, but the rain felt weirdly sticky. He touched his hair and realized something terrifying, “What’s happening? Why is the rain red?” The abandoned umbrella twirled in the wind. The student looked under the umbrella, and the human face was gone. “No, where is it?”

The panicked student looked around. The man in the red umbrella was across the street. The monster still hadn’t left!

“His face is no longer with me. Why is it still following me?” Blood slid down his head. It felt very uncomfortable. The student’s hair felt like it had been encased in solidifying gel. It was both painful and itchy. He kept scratching his head. The more he scratched, the itchier it was.

“No way...” His scalp became uneven. There appeared to be a human face that had grown there.

“Ah!” The student looked at his hands which were covered in blood and hair. He rushed forward like crazy. The sky was raining, but the student’s sight was dominated by blood. He kept screaming, and more people like him appeared on the street!

The student charged into a small shop by the roadside. The first floor was a store for stationery and snacks, while the boss lived on the second floor. "Is anyone here? I need help!"

The student wanted to tear his scalp off. He couldn't stand it anymore. He grabbed the scissors from the counter and leaned close to a mirror. He used sharp scissors to cut at his bloody hair. The more he cut, the crazier his expression.

"Get out! Get out of my head!" The scissors cut through the skin. The torment of pain and itchiness made him lose his mind. He yelled and screamed as he stabbed at his scalp. "Die! Die! Die!"

Hearing the screams, the boss came down from the second floor. "Who's there?"

Near the corner, the boss saw the student kneeling behind the shelf. His clothes were bloody, and a pair of scissors was stuck in his head. This shocked the boss. "Young man, your head..."

"My head? Where's my head? I can't feel it. It is so itchy and painful! The face wants to crawl into my body!" The student turned around. His face was bleeding, and his facial features were ruined. He reached his trembling hands toward the boss. He climbed up from the ground. "Have you seen my head? Is there something on it? Is there? Take it off! Use the knife to cut it off!"

The boss retreated and took out his phone to call the police, but the line was busy. He didn't dare to get too close to the boy. "Wait, wait a minute! I'll go get help!"

The boss ran to the door. As he got close, he saw a man with a red umbrella at the door. "There's something wrong with the child. Can you..." Then, the boss noticed something was wrong. The man under the red umbrella appeared to have no face!

With shaking legs, the boss returned to the second floor. He locked the door. "What's going on today? Why is there screaming everywhere?" The boss' phone screen was a picture of his wife. She was a few months pregnant. Compelled by worry, the boss called his wife.

The wife picked up after 10 seconds. The boss said worriedly, "Xiao Yun, go and lock all the windows and doors. Something is very wrong with the city today. You're pregnant. You should stay put!"

“Okay. I understand. You have to be careful too.” The wife’s gentle voice came from the phone. The boss sighed in relief. “I’ll figure out a way to go back home. Wait for me!”

“You’ve been working hard looking after the store.” The wife said, “Right, I have a piece of good news to tell you.”

“What is it?”

“Haven’t you been asking for a boy? I helped you look this morning. It is indeed a boy.” The wife’s gentle voice turned hoarse. Even her laughter turned creepy. The boss hung up. His brain buzzed. He didn’t dare to process what his wife said.

Footsteps echoed outside the second floor’s locked door. Fresh blood leaked into the room.

“I can’t stay here anymore! The man in the umbrella will get here soon!” The boss needed to go home to check on his pregnant wife. He ran to the window. When he opened the window, he saw his neighbor who lived across the alley. The man hurriedly grabbed the stuff in his room.

“It’s not safe here! We need to leave!” The boss shouted at his neighbor. His neighbor looked at him strangely.

“I know. I saw it.”

“What do you mean? How did you see it?” The boss looked outside the window, trying to find a way to escape.

“I used my eyes.” The neighbor’s head reached out of the window. His neck extended, and soon, his head was close to the boss’ window. “Unfortunately, your window was locked yesterday night.”

The boss didn’t dare to delay. He jumped out of the second-floor window. The sound of bone dislocation came from one of his legs. He dragged his limping leg and walked out of the alley. His neighbor called from behind him, but the boss didn’t dare to stop.

“Help! Help!” The boss moved as fast as he could. The young couple, who owned the cellphone store close by, walked into the alley.

“Ah Mei! Xiao Cheng! Help me! This alley is haunted!” When the boss saw the young couple, he shouted. But when the couple got close, he noticed they were acting very weird. The boyfriend, Xiao Cheng, hugged his wife’s waist tightly. The muscles on his face twitched uncontrollably. The girlfriend, Ah Mei, kept her head lowered, but she had on a very thick and ugly makeup.

“Ah Mei, what’s wrong with your makeup?” The boss stopped nervously, “Did someone do your makeup for you?”

Veins popped on Xiao Cheng’s face. “I did her makeup. I didn’t expect the death spots would appear on her face so soon!” The hand hidden behind slowly appeared. Xiao Cheng laughed harder as he held a knife stuck with flesh. “It’s okay. I’ll do a better job on your face this time!” Xiao Cheng charged forward. The boss wanted to run, but his injury slowed him down greatly. His mouth was covered, and blood flowed. He kicked at Xiao Cheng and used the last of his energy to push the trash can beside him over. The trash was scattered about. A cola can fell out and rolled out of the alley before hitting a pair of sneakers. The owner of the sneakers had blond hair. He wore a pair of headphones, and he was revising the English vocabulary repeated on the phone. The yellow-haired student glanced at the can and then turned his head to look down the alley. There appeared to be people fighting there.

“I used to brawl in alleys too... until I met that demon.” The student shivered. He remembered his experience. His classmate’s father used him as bait to lure out the bad guys in the city. He purposely pretended to be a ghost to frighten him and use various methods to threaten him. “I need to get into a good university. Even if I have to retake the exam 10 times, I need to complete my promise with Fu Sheng’s father! Damn it. I’ll make something of myself and leave this city!”

He raised the volume and practiced his English through the phone. The young man never had any interest in studying in the past. But to get into a good university, he ignored his family’s persuasion and studied until dawn every night. Honestly, his family was worried about him. To preserve his dignity, they hired a psychologist to act as his tutor.

“I can do this!” After giving himself a cheer, he walked forward. He studied whenever he was free. He was fully submerged in the sea of knowledge. The streetlight turned red, and the student stopped. He was working on his pronunciation when he heard children crying.

“Why is someone crying?” He looked around. He realized there were very few people on the street that day. It was already 7 am, but the sky was still dark. “Did I get the time wrong?”

The crying became clearer. The young man listened closer and realized the sound came from his earphone. He picked off his earphone, and the screams, cries, and pleas came from all sides. The young-haired student was stunned. Slowly, the children’s crying escaped from the earphones and appeared behind the back of his head. The young man turned his head around. He looked at the reflection in the window of the shop next to him. There was a strange child sitting on his shoulders, his hands playing with his earphones.

“Have I been carrying it all this way?” The child knew that he had been discovered. He let go of the earphones and then raised his hands. His sharp fingers stabbed at the young man’s ears.

“Be careful!” A bloody face appeared. The young man was toppled over. The small ghost on his back was consumed by a middle-aged woman.

The blond student had no idea what was happening when his arm was dragged by a girl holding a phone. “Come with me!”

“No! You have to be a ghost too! You’ll drag me to a deserted location and then...” At that moment, the middle-aged woman pounced at him. He was so scared that he scurried up from the ground and followed the young woman.

10 minutes later, the scared young man found himself hiding inside a convenience store’s warehouse. The woman who saved him was beside him.

“Thank you!” The blond student took deep breaths. He didn’t even dare to speak too loudly then. “What is going on outside? It’s like everyone has gone crazy.”

“You need to learn to get used to it. Today might be the most normal day of your life from now on.” Xiao Yu took down the bloody phone from her neck. Her mother shielded beside her. “My name is Yu Yi. This is my mom. Someone told me to come to find you to ask you some questions.”

“Ask me?” The young man was confused.

“The man says that he’s Fu Sheng’s father. He wants to know info about Fu Sheng. Did Fu Sheng do anything unusual in the past year?” Xiao Yu called a number and handed her phone to the young man.

The young man’s legs weakened as he stared at the bloody phone. When he heard, ‘Fu Sheng’s father’, his body couldn’t help shaking. The fear returned!

Chapter 693: Shell

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After thinking for a long time, the blond took the bloody phone. He slowly placed the phone beside his ears, and his heart was in his throat. “Hello?”

“I remember you were from the same school as Fu Sheng. Did he do anything out of the ordinary for the past year?” Han Fei’s voice came from the phone. The blond was confused because Han Fei didn’t sound like Fu Yi. At that moment, Han Fei added, “You better don’t lie to me, or else I’ll kick you out to the street and use you to lure the ghosts.”

Even though the voice had changed, the tone was the same. The question in the young man’s heart disappeared instantly. “Hello, uncle. I’m not that familiar with Fu Sheng. I heard from his classmates that he easily got the first place in school after some hard work, but then... he became rather... different from normal.”

“Different from normal?”

“Yes. He communicated even more with the ghosts. There was no longer any happiness in his life. It was like the end of the world was coming, but he was the only one who knew it.” The young man told Han Fei everything he knew. “None of us knew what happened to him. From a moment onwards, he started to hate making choices. He skipped all the multiple-choice questions in the exam and had a fixed schedule for his everyday life, eating the same thing. If the food was sold out, he’d rather go hungry than eat something else.”

“This is more than difficulty in choosing. He is afraid of choices.” Han Fei believed Fu Sheng obtained the black box around this time. He was about to make the choice that would affect his whole life.

“But he was still very appreciative of you. When he was in the most pain, he would write letters to you and message your number. You are his support.” The young man was better at talking than before. “This continued for a while, and Fu Sheng stopped appearing at school altogether.”

“Do you know where he went?”

“Someone saw him at the theme park at night. Some said he would come back to school to study at night. Some said he had died, and they saw his body hanging on the clock tower at Time Building.” The young man paused because he remembered something. “Right. A few months ago, a teacher went to find Fu Sheng. She saw Fu Sheng at the city’s plastic surgery hospital. She saw many strange things around Fu Sheng. He seemed to be ready to sew those things into his body.”

“Does he want to get united with ghosts?” Han Fei frowned. Fu Sheng must have been pushed to the edge to attempt something so insane.

“They might not be ghosts...” The blond glanced at Xiao Yu’s mother. “In any case, I heard the teacher say that the things around him didn’t harm him. They even told him to ignore their feelings so that he could save more people.”

“The ghosts hope that Fu Sheng would choose to save the humans.” Han Fei started to understand why the female student became the way she was. This whole thing was more complicated than he thought.

“Uncle, is Fu Sheng’s prediction real?”

“What do you think? Monsters, ghosts, and mad people are roaming the city. This is hell.” Han Fei told the young man to return the phone to Xiao Yu. “You two should stay where you are. I’ll go there now. Take care.”

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Han Fei, inside the taxi, ended the call. He saw the chaos outside the window, and his heart trembled. In this large metropolis, there were tragedies happening everywhere. The sun didn’t appear like usual, but the ghosts walked out of the darkness. Crying and pleading became common.

“This is too scary.” Xiao Jia sucked in a cold breath. He didn’t dare to look outside the window.

“Did you notice something?” Han Fei looked at the scenery outside the window. “Things were not that serious when we left the family compound. The closer we are to the theme park, the more common the ghosts and people become crazier.”

“I don’t dare to think of anything now.” Xiao Jia hugged his head. “The two worlds have overlapped, and ghosts are everywhere. This is scarier than the end of the world. Maybe dying is easier.”

The supernatural phenomenon occurred everywhere. The city was dyed red. There were so many ghosts that humans were like toys. Not only Xiao Jia but also the other players were shocked too. This was not an Iyashikei game. Even the most terrifying apocalyptic game was not as despairing as this city.

“Compared to them, we’re quite lucky. At least we have the tools to fight back.” Han Fei looked at the buildings outside the window. When the unknown terror descended, most people locked their doors and hid at home, waiting for death to come knocking.

Among them, Lee Guo Er drove quietly. She didn’t participate in the conversation. After all, talking was pointless.

The black taxi led the way. The two vans by the players followed behind. Han Fei’s team had expanded to 13 people. Han Fei had carefully selected these people. Their power could affect the ghosts to a certain degree. Actually, Han Fei could have easily abandoned the players, but he had a goal. He wanted to train these players so that they would have a brave heart and stop being fearful of the ghosts. When the cryptic world really assimilates into the real world in the future, these players would be able to protect others.

One hour later, Han Fei arrived at the spot where Xiao Yu and the blond young man were hiding. They headed to the plastic surgery hospital together. Han Fei had a deep impression of this hospital, but he couldn’t remember specific details.

Once he pushed open the hospital gate, Han Fei raised his hand for everyone to slow down. There were screams everywhere outside the hospital, but it was incredibly quiet inside the hospital.

“Are there no ghosts here? Or is there a very scary ghost here that has killed everyone?” Han Fei grabbed the blond young man. “You will lead the way.”

“Why me again?” The young man’s lips trembled. If time could turn back, he would never bully his schoolmates.

“Stop wasting time. Where did your teacher say she saw Fu Sheng?”

“It’s the emergency room on the 7th floor, the place where his mother died.” The young man moved forward unwillingly. Han Fei and the other players followed.

Han Fei returned to the hospital, but things were completely different. There was no one inside the hospital.

“Han Fei, please save my daughter first. Yan Yue’s wounds need treatment.” The previous Brain left the family compound with Han Fei. His daughter’s condition was not good. Yan Yue’s situation was complicated. Her mind was corrupted by the butterfly and had harmed many people. Her mother killed all the girls Yan Yue was envious of to patch up her soul. This pair of mother and daughter was like demons. Even the players hated them.

“They are wrong, and they deserve to die, but they can’t die yet. My wife’s power can help all of you.” Brain tried to convince Han Fei. “She has killed 10 people, but if she can save 100 people...”

“The 10 she killed will still be dead.” Han Fei didn’t argue with Brain. He took out Rest in Peace and walked down the sickrooms. The deeper they went, the quieter it was. The patients and staff appeared to be locked up. There were only pale walls and half-open doors.

“Someone has been here before us. Many of the rooms have been kicked down.”

When they reached Building 6, the cat in Han Fei’s backpack climbed out. It slid down the stairs and went to the basement. The hospital had a secret underground tunnel that connected all seven buildings. Only a small amount of doctors had the qualifications to use it.

“It feels like the temperature has dropped a lot.” Xiao Jia lowered his voice as if raising his voice would attract something.

“Look at the walls. The patterns are similar to the patterns of the resurrection ritual at Blue White Tuition Center.” Lee Guo Er touched the walls. The patterns wiggled like they were alive.

“It looks like Dream has been here.” Han Fei pieced together the memory fragments in his mind. “Fu Sheng and Dream have always been a nemesis. After the cryptic world was sealed, both Dream and Fu Sheng were trapped in the cryptic world.” Back then, Fu Sheng had the support of the other managers, but even so, he couldn’t completely kill the Butterfly. Currently, Han Fei had nothing and was an enemy to everyone. How far could he go?

“Mad Laughter came from the blood-red orphanage inside my brain, so he should be the other me.” Han Fei had no support from the outside world. He knew that when he was in despair, he could only rely on himself. The patterns stretched through the entire underground tunnel. Dream appeared to plan to sacrifice everyone at the hospital.

“If I didn’t change the fate of the hospital, mad people would be trapped here. They included the rich who hunger for life and beauty as patients who were caught by the hospital. Their madness would be used by the Butterfly, and they would become the sacrifice for his revival.” Han Fei knew the hospital was very important, but he had no idea Dream would target this place too.

As they continued to move downward, all the patterns were replaced by hair. The hair was taken from the patients and doctors. Han Fei also found the first living person.

“Du Jing?” The name surfaced when Han Fei saw the face. After Du Zhu died, her little sister, Du Jing, became the new hospital director. In his memory, destiny had changed. Those who should have died were saved by Han Fei. Everything was improving, but Du Jing didn’t acquire her bliss.

“Why is it like this?”

Du Jing held two sharp pens. One of them was labeled hatred, and the other was love. She used them like knitting needles to knit the black hair. Human heads dangled between the second and third-floor basement. There were patients and doctors. Dream had given them the fairest ending.

Du Jing suddenly stopped moving as if sensing something. She turned around to scan everything before going back to her knitting.

“Du Jing?” Han Fei noticed that the woman’s eyes were dull, like she had lost all hope and had become Dream’s puppet.

Han Fei walked forward, and he noticed Du Jing weaved out different things using the patients’ hair. There were children’s clothes, football, and other mementos. With each new object, a patient’s eyes would close. Du Jing seemed to use this method to steal the patient’s happiness and dreams. The things she knitted would only exist for a while before they became a part of the giant pattern on the wall.

“Dream has left all the negative emotions to the living humans and stolen their remaining beauty.” Han Fei wanted to stop Du Jing. Du Jing didn’t react when he touched her. However, when Han Fei wanted to grab the pens, Du Jing suddenly waved the pens like crazy and shouted her daughter’s name.

“Has Dream taken her daughter and used her to threaten her?” In real life, Du Jing’s daughter was still alive. She even became friends with Fu Sheng and Fu Tian. “Perhaps Fu Sheng has died his best to save the girl, but unfortunately, no one but me still remembers Fu Sheng in real life.”

Han Fei walked past Du Jing and came to Building Seven. He saw the most shocking scene since he woke up at the hospital. The entire basement of Building Seven had been hollowed out. The patients and doctors had been used as bricks to build a Building Eight that spread underground.

There was a giant mirror between Buildings Seven and Eight. A person’s birth date was written in the mirror. A young man who looked like Fu Sheng was trapped inside the mirror.

“Butterfly at Ziggurat wanted to use me like the shell for his revival. Has Dream chosen the former Fu Sheng as his shell?”

Chapter 694: Reunite

694 Reunite

The resurrection ritual had a need of eight items. A mirror with one’s astrology chart was the most important. It reflected the past, split up dreams and reality. It was instrumental to the ritual.

“Why would a boy be inside the mirror?” Xiao Jia leaned close to Han Fei.

“Apparently, when a person dies, part of their soul will be left in the mirror they used most often when they were alive. The same probably works here.” Worm stood on Han Fei’s other side. Ever since he saw Han Fei’s scarred arms, he felt a kindred spirit in Han Fei. Han Fei ignored the two and continued to move forward with the red string.

“The plastic surgery hospital is decorated as a shrine. The eight buildings correspond to eight items. Dream wants to complete the resurrection ritual here...” Han Fei initially thought Fu Sheng was the choice of the theme park’s three managers, but now he realized Dream was also targeting Fu Sheng. Fu Sheng should be the ‘product’ of negotiations and compromises of all the managers.

The basement of Building Seven had collapsed. Du Jing was responsible for the rebuild. Unfortunately, she had been taken control over by Dream. The hospital was modeled after what Dream wanted it to be. The endless dead bodies became Building Eight. Despair and negative emotions festered. It seemed to correspond to the cryptic world. The surface of Building Eight was the clean Building Seven that represented healing, hope, and death. The recovered patient found their smile and left with their families. The patients who failed to be rescued were transferred underground. Their dead bodies became a brick to construct the cryptic world. Han Fei climbed on the dead bodies. He gripped the black hair that dangled in the air as climbed to the spot connecting Buildings Seven and Eight.

Han Fei took a deep breath and ignored the stench in the air. His fingers encased into the festering bodies as he approached the mirror.

The young man in the mirror heard the sound. He turned away from the mirror, curled up in the corner, and buried his head between his knees. He didn’t dare to face the outside world or leave the mirror.

“Fu Sheng?” Han Fei stopped before the giant mirror. When he saw the young man in the mirror, the broken pieces of memories in his mind slowly joined together. The young man in the mirror was just like Fu Sheng in the previous memory world. Everything returned to when they first met. Fu Sheng locked himself up in his room and refused to communicate with anyone. The world was hostile to him, and he faced it alone.

“Fu Sheng!” Han Fei screamed at the mirror. The young man didn’t even respond. The young man curled up in the corner was the real Fu Sheng and not Fu Sheng’s memory fragment. “You should remember me! We’ve eaten and fed stray cats together in that small park.”

Han Fei's hands touched the mirror, but the cold mirror was like a cage that refused to open. Han Fei's voice couldn't travel through either.

"The mirror only retains the soul. Dream can use the mirror to control that young man until he fully takes over him." The injured Yan Yue suddenly spoke. Yan Yue's mother wanted to prove her value, "Dream has prepared eight vessels for himself. Yan Yue and Fu Sheng were two of them. However, Fu Sheng was special because the other managers also valued him."

"How do you know all these?"

"I've met him at the park at night. Humans and ghosts want to pour their thoughts into the kid so that he'd become the park's new owner." Yan Yue's expression was grim. It was still her mother controlling the body, "The family compound and the plastic surgery hospital, other than these two places, there are six more places in the city where Dream has hidden his vessels. If you want to stop his ritual, you have to destroy all the vessels."

Dream was very cunning. He had prepared eight backups.

"It looks like we don't have much time." Han Fei had Xiao Jia carry Fu Tian over. They worked together to place the young Fu Tian before the giant mirror. Before Han Fei said anything, Fu Tian collapsed on the mirror, shouting his brother's name. He was just a child. He had been separated from his mother and mingled with a bunch of fugitives. He controlled his emotions normally, but when he saw his only family, his fragile side appeared. Fu Tian cried. He was devastated when he saw his brother trapped inside the mirror. "Mother has been looking for you! She lied to me and said you went overseas to study! She made many calls at night to find clues. She really misses you!"

The young voice trembled. The young man's ears twitched, but he didn't do more than that.

"Big brother!" As Fu Tian's voice grew, the silence of the hospital was shattered. Worms appeared to crawl out of the bricks of dead bodies. The dangling hair swayed even though there was no wind underground.

“Dream has placed traps near every resurrection ritual. The trap on Yan Yue is the butterfly that can enter people’s dreams. I don’t know what trap is here. Be careful.” After Yan Yue’s mother said that, she grabbed the previous Brain by his arm. She gave him a signal and told him to retreat.

The young Fu Tian didn’t know these things. He had been scared along the way. When he saw his big brother, the anxiety in his heart exploded. He wanted to be with his brother. After his father left, his brother was the pillar of the family. They said they’d look after mother together, but his brother had escaped on his own and disappeared among the crowd. He didn’t understand, but he didn’t ask lest his mother became sad.

“Your brother has his own difficulty. He has chosen people between people and ghosts, and the city between home and city. In a way, he is not a bad person. At least compared to me, he is a good person.” This memory world showed Han Fei everything that had happened in the past. In a way, this was Fu Sheng’s last plea toward Han Fei.

“There is no need to retrace a wrong path. I also understand how hard it is to make a new path. I’ll face both new and old obstacles, but I can’t give up because it’s difficult.”

Building Eight started to change. The dead bodies were punctured by hair. Their chests rose and fell. After they were connected, it felt like the building was breathing. Han Fei pulled Fu Tian back as he took out Rest in Peace. His thoughts were simple. Since Dream had trapped Fu Sheng’s soul inside the mirror, he would cut open the mirror.

“Rest in Peace gets sharper the more sins the target has committed. This mirror has conducted endless murders, so it should cut through it like butter.”

The mutation of Building Eight sped up. This place had gathered the hospital’s staff and patients. The number was staggering. Even if they were just the lowest-level Animated Regrets, they could kill everyone except Han Fei easily.

“Han Fei, we need to retreat!” Xiao Jia was closest to Han Fei. The things he had experienced recently were scarier than all his nightmares combined.

“Bring Fu Tian with you. Go back to the surface first!”

“What about you?”

“Leave me be!” Han Fei held the knife. He aligned himself with everyone inside the hilt. He concentrated and focused.

A brilliant light flashed in the underground building. The beauty of humanity formed a blade that slashed at the mirror surface. Han Fei used all his energy, but the mirror didn't shatter as he expected. Han Fei looked up in surprise. He noticed the surface of the mirror rippled. Rest in Peace had cut into the mirror, but it was unable to shatter it. If anything, it started to combine with it. As the blade entered the mirror, strangers' faces appeared on the mirror. They didn't show any pain or despair, only smile and release.

“What is this mirror made of that even Rest in Peace can't cut through it?”

With that cut, all the bodies that made up Building Eight started to mutate. They became angry, like someone had ruined their only hope. The eyes on the walls opened, the scabs bled, and the departed glared at Han Fei.

“I think I get that butterfly's trap now.” Han Fei figured out the key. “Dream is an expert manipulator. He can create nightmares, but he can create beautiful dreams too. He must have stripped these staff and doctors of their good dreams and used their hope and dreams to create the mirror.

“The mirror hanging over the hell hole is a cage for Fu Sheng's soul, and it is also the amalgamation of all the dead's most beautiful memories. Once someone tries to damage the mirror, they are damaging the dead's good memories. It will naturally cause them to go rampage.” Dream had created a special balance. The human world was above, and the cryptic world was below. The two worlds were united with humanity's most beautiful memories. Despair and hope existed side by side. Even more impressive was all the beauty had nothing to do with Fu Sheng. The human world he wanted to save didn't love him and left him with the deepest despair. It was why the soul trapped inside the mirror didn't respond to the outside world.

“Dream pulled out everyone's good memories and made a mirror to trap his soul. I tried to use the humanity to cut through the mirror.” He touched the mirror surface. Han Fei stared at the young man curled up in the corner. He felt like he had returned to the last memory world. “You have to suffer too many things. Perhaps that is the fate for those chosen by the black box.”

Han Fei had more things to say, but the whole building was changing. If he stayed any longer, even Xu Qin couldn't ensure his safety.

"I think I've missed something..." Just as Han Fei prepared to turn, he saw from the corner of his eyes, the chain around the young man's neck. It was a phone casing chain. The young man's knees were squished together, and there was something stuck there.

Han Fei was reminded of his last encounter with Fu Sheng. After some hesitation, he shouted at Xiao Yu, "Give me your phone!"

Xiao Yu sent him her mother's bloody phone. Han Fei tried to remember that last number. The memory pieces came together. He keyed in the number. Soon, the call connected. The familiar ringtone rang inside and outside the mirror. Fu Sheng shivered. This was his first response to the outside world. He slowly raised his eyes to look at the caller ID on his phone. After a temporary buzz, his gaze changed. He held his phone and stood up. He looked around. At that moment, he looked just like a normal child who was lost.

The mutation in Building Eight had started. Han Fei's legs were gripped by the hands of the dead. However, he didn't move. He stared at the young man inside the mirror and placed the phone beside his ear. The phone rang. Fu Sheng stared at the screen for a long time before he answered the call. The sound of his breathing came through. After a long hesitation, Fu Sheng uttered his first words. "Is it you?"

"It's me."

The phone screen blurred. "Where are you?"

"I'm outside the mirror. I've been looking at you."

Fu Sheng walked out of the darkness. He didn't know where the surface was. The world inside the mirror appeared to be in total darkness.

“It’s okay. Don’t worry. Just follow my instructions. Keep going forward, yes.” Han Fei’s voice came out of the phone. Just like before, the young man slowly moved to the mirror with Han Fei’s help. His hand also touched the mirror surface. “Are you outside?”

“Yes. There’s a mirror between us. I can see you, but you can’t see me. However, even when you’re in the dark, I want you to stand back up.”

Through a few simple words, Han Fei confirmed the Fu Sheng in the mirror was the Fu Sheng he had interacted with in the previous memory world.

“I can’t see you.” Fu Sheng’s hand was pressed on the surface. “I can see all the ghosts, but I can’t see you and mom.”

“I need you to take a step back. I’ll stab my knife into the mirror. See if you can grab it.” Han Fei wasn’t the kind to give up easily. He raised Rest in Peace again. Everyone cut at the mirror. The brilliant light was like a lifeline everyone extended towards Fu Sheng.

Chapter 695: Butcher's Knife

695 Butcher's Knife

On the building made from dead bodies, Han Fei and his companions reached toward the mirror surface before the souls went berserk. Han Fei was not alone. He had found many kindred spirits. They supported each other, holding the torch as they moved with determination towards the dark.

The light of the blade flashed in the eyes of the dead, illuminating their nightmare. All the mutated souls became incredibly angry. Those who had gotten used to darkness believed that the light was the real sin. However, they didn’t dare to do anything because the light had gotten too bright.

“Fu Sheng!” Han Fei was a rational person, but sometimes, he was more naïve than most people in the world. At that moment, he would rather take the risk of dying to rescue the real Fu Sheng.

The light pierced through the mirror. The mirror made from smiling faces didn’t stop it. The blade easily entered the mirror. It brought hope to Fu Sheng inside the mirror. From Fu Sheng’s perspective, originally, everything was dark. There was no sound and light but things changed. The familiar voice

came from the phone that he would never part with, and a ray of light cut through the permanent darkness.

Fu Sheng reached toward the light. Warmth, kindness, and stability, he didn't know how to describe the feeling he felt when he touched the light.

All the souls went on a rampage when the mirror was attacked. All the patients and doctors became monsters. They struggled loose from the shackles of death and charged at Han Fei with fury and resentment.

The rotten arms grabbed onto Han Fei. The sound of bones breaking and zombie monsters growling entered the young man's ears through the phone. He couldn't tell what was happening outside the mirror. He could only see that the light was still there. No matter how scary things got, the light remained.

"Are you alright?"

"I'm fine. I'll find a way to get you out."

"Actually, I'm fine here alone."

"I'm like you. I've walked through the darkness. If there's someone in the world who can understand you, it's me. Therefore, you can trust and rely on me."

The curse exuded from his body. The rotten zombie bit Han Fei, leaving behind a festering wound on Han Fei's shoulder. However, the zombie was infected by Soul Poison. He fell from the top and couldn't move again. The young man inside the mirror could hear what was happening outside. He hesitated and then turned to look at the darkness behind him. "Instead of being trapped in the dark forever, becoming part of this light might be a better choice."

Han Fei outside the mirror was still considering how to break the mirror, but the young man inside the mirror walked voluntarily towards it. He allowed the light to pierce through his chest! His hands pressed against the mirror. The young man looked at the darkness before him. He knew that the person he had been waiting for was right before him, standing in the future that he couldn't see. Han Fei didn't expect

the young man to do this. He wanted to turn Fu Sheng into a ghost tattoo, but his vengeance was toward Fu Sheng's memory fragment, who had killed him 99 times, not this child.

"I never got the chance to say thank you. I'll not create trouble for you anymore."

The young man's soul dissolved. He held the hands that wanted to save him. He couldn't find a way to leave the darkness, so he chose to stand with the light. Since he couldn't bring light to others, then he'd become the ember that kept the light going. Han Fei tapped on the mirror. He wanted to retract the blade, but it was already too late. Fu Sheng's heart was punctured by Rest in Peace. He imbued the remaining humanity of his soul into the blade.

"My past is endless despair. Your appearance has given birth to these beautiful memories. Now, I will return them to you. I hope you'll not reject them. This is the only thing I can do for you."

Salvation went both ways. Fu Sheng couldn't leave the mirror, so he came up with this idea. As Han Fei tried to pull the knife out, the mirror made from beautiful memories started to ripple. Some of the memories were peaceful, and others were exciting. When they were triggered, they would explode in inexplicable power. It was hard to persist on the correct path. Even so, there would be endless ordinary people who would walk that path. Fu Sheng's lingering soul entered the blade. The light of Rest in Peace burned brighter. The memories that guarded Fu Sheng flowed into the blade as well. Han Fei held the hilt and slowly pulled. The mirror started to crack. The smiling faces were drawn into the butcher's knife alongside Fu Sheng's soul.

The mirror shattered. Rest in Peace transformed. Something blurry surfaced on the hilt.

"Fu Sheng?" Han Fei didn't expect Fu Sheng's trapped soul to enter Rest in Peace. The kid started as a kind and gentle person too. In the whole city, he was the only one looking after the lonely ghosts.

Han Fei looked at the blade with complicated emotions. In Fu Sheng's other memory world, he had changed Fu Sheng's destiny. At that moment, Han Fei had changed his destiny too. If Fu Sheng didn't hear his voice, the mirror wouldn't have shattered; if Han Fei didn't regain a part of his memory, he wouldn't have remembered the number he left for Fu Sheng. 99 deaths carved out a path for Han Fei. He couldn't guarantee that he'd reach the end, but at least he was closer to the goal.

Raising Rest in Peace, the doctors and patients that held onto Han Fei let go. They appeared to see their dream at that moment. Many shadows appeared behind Han Fei. He was alone, but he was never lonely.

“It was Fu Sheng’s good memories that were trapped inside the mirror. He was a part of the soul pulled out of Fu Sheng.” Since the danger was gone, Yan Yue stopped and moved back with Brain. She was the first to escape and the first to return.

“Fu Sheng should have abandoned the goodness in his heart here before entering the theme park. Didn’t the blond student say that a teacher once saw Fu Sheng try to sew the ghosts at the hospital into his body?” Yan Yue’s mother was surprised that Han Fei managed to survive. She was cautious of the butcher’s knife he was holding.

Han Fei had encountered similar occasions before. The earliest was with the Mirror God. In the underground surgical room, he was deprived of his organs and the illusion of goodness. He opened his arms to embrace the darkness. The same thing happened again. Dream collected Fu Sheng’s abandoned human kindness to make them into his vessel, but he didn’t expect Han Fei’s appearance.

“I’ve changed Fu Sheng’s destiny, but he still chose his old path. Is he telling me that the future is predestined?” Han Fei’s eyes landed on the glowing blade. This blade was very special. It didn’t absorb the slaughtered souls but allowed those who believed in Han Fei to stay. The ‘stock’ at the meatpacking factory at Cattle Alley, the senior ghost who had to sustain the hereditary ghost, and now, the kind persona of Fu Sheng.

“Rest in peace...”

The light of the blade slowly faded away, and a robotic voice echoed in Han Fei’s mind. “Notifications for Player 0000! You’ve obtained Grade D unique butcher’s knife—Rest in Peace!”

Chapter 696: Orphan Four

696 Orphan Four

Finding release from the past to find a new life was a part of Rest in Peace. Han Fei held the hilt. He felt the weight of the hilt, but at the same time, it felt very light. His companions had handed their humanity to Han Fei, and they held the blade with him.

“Grade D unique butcher’s knife.” Rest in Peace in the past could cut through Pure Hatred, but it appeared to have gotten sharper. The mirror that connected Buildings Seven and Eight was shattered. All the beauty of humanity was absorbed by Rest in Peace. The precarious balance was tipped over. The trapped souls rushed forward with resentment. The building made from dead bodies collapsed. The rotten bodies fell from their positions in the walls. It was raining dead. The souls filled with negative energy flew past Han Fei. They took over every inch of the hospital. They left behind curses and resentment until their bodies dissipated.

Han Fei led the others to exit Building Seven. He once again was greeted by the severe consequences when the cryptic world infiltrated the real world. The accumulated resentment would explode in the real world.

“Fu Sheng created Perfect Life so that the game could be the ‘mirror’ between the two worlds?” Perfect Life had a heavy feature on Iyashikei and the beauty of the human world. It was like the mirror between Building Seven and Eight. Everything matched. “Perfect Life is the buffer zone. Fu Sheng’s real goal might be to use it to heal the cryptic world.”

The idea was great, but it was too idealistic. Lured by giant profit, even Fu Sheng’s biological brother, Fu Tian, had turned on him. Things had reached the most horrible state. If it were not handled properly, it would lead to the worst results. The chaotic and gory city was not imagination. It was happening for real. Everything in the memory world was based on real events. Han Fei glanced at the emergency room swamped by the souls, and he called Yan Yue over. “You said Butterfly had prepared eight vessels. Where are the other six of them?”

“There’s one at Happiness Neighborhood Building Four. It’s an orphan.” Yan Yue’s mother pointed at her daughter’s stomach wound. “I’ll tell you the other five later.”

Happiness Neighborhood was a special place for Han Fei, so when he heard Yan Yue’s mother mention that, his brows twitched, but he soon returned to normal. The doctors among the player used the medical tools at the hospital to dress Yan Yue’s wounds, and then they took a cab to Happiness Neighborhood.

“At first, Happiness Neighborhood is used to place those orphans. That neighborhood is the saddest place in the city.” Yan Yue’s mother became chattier once her daughter’s condition improved, “The theme park wanted to find its managers from the most despairing people. However, most of them couldn’t reach their requirement. Therefore, one of the Humans came up with an idea. Using charity as a front, they opened a private children’s home to collect these abandoned children and babies. He used

his formula to cultivate children of despairs. He injected them with different negative emotions, manually creating the monsters.”

Everyone in the car had a gloomy expression. They thought Dream was the worst among the managers, but Human was not much better.

“Each child was given their own persona. The workers cultivated them until they were old enough to be spent to Happiness Orphanage where they would be spared with suitable parents.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“The kids have no right to choose their parents. To cultivate the persona that the workers wanted, they would select the parents who had severe deficiencies and move the orphans into their homes. They would grow up twisted,” Yan Yue’s mother knew many things. Brain listened quietly. His fists were tense.

“My home is at Happiness Neighborhood. Did I grow up in that entertainment too?” Han Fei still couldn’t remember his childhood memory. It had been taken by Mad Laughter.

“You once lived at Happiness Neighborhood?!” Yan Yue’s mother was shocked. She stared at Han Fei for a long time and said in a different tone, “I know you hate them, but we need to focus on the big picture. We need to focus on dealing with Dream and not drag in the other managers.”

“Don’t worry. Someone else will deal with the theme park. All we need to do is to clean up the ghosts in the city and destroy Dream’s ritual.” Mad Laughter wanted to deal with Fu Sheng and the theme park. Han Fei trusted him. In a way, it meant that he had self-confidence. The black taxi zoomed down the road. After saving Fu Sheng’s lingering soul, Han Fei had a renewed perspective of this city. Even if certain people only existed in memory, they deserved a chance at salvation. Han Fei would help if he could. This helped Lee Guo Er gain some points, and the group supporting Han Fei grew bigger. In this chaotic city, Han Fei gave people hope. The black taxi became a ghost story everyone wanted to encounter.

“Han Fei, aren’t we being a bit too high profile? If this continues, we’ll be targeted by the bigger ghosts.” Xiao Jia looked at the cavalcade behind them. Many people had escaped from home. Ghosts could appear anywhere, so their homes were not safe anymore.

“Mad Laughter is responsible for creating chaos, and I’m responsible for maintaining basic rules. We can send these people to Happiness Neighborhood. I want the neighborhood to live up to its name.”

Along the way, Han Fei ran into many different ghosts. Some hid in the shadows, some disguised among the humans. Thankfully, Han Fei was very experienced. He managed to save a lot of citizens. Han Fei’s live demonstrations impressed a lot of players. They had no idea a horror film actor was such a good ghost catcher. They finally understood Han Fei was not acting in the movies. More people followed Han Fei. They were all rescued by him. Han Fei didn’t force them to follow him. The citizens voluntarily followed behind the black taxi.

The sky brightened slightly around noon. The ghosts temporarily retreated to the shadows. The city was swallowed by crying. The survivors finally had the chance to mourn. But they had no idea the calamity was only starting. Han Fei reunited with the police that descended into nightmares yesterday night, and they came to the Happiness Neighborhood.

“Don’t run away. Let me clean these few buildings first.” Happiness Neighborhood was very special to Han Fei. He didn’t want his home to be corrupted by outside ghosts. He wanted to turn this place into a sanctuary. Han Fei never underestimated the power of ghosts, but he would never underestimate the power of human adaptation. With so many citizens gathered together, he would find special talents like Xiao Yu, and they would bring him hope. This path was difficult, and many people would die. Han Fei wouldn’t dare to attempt this in real life, but thankfully, he was inside the memory world. He didn’t need to care about others. He only needed to risk his own life.

He entered Building One with Rest in Peace. Han Fei noticed all the citizens with the surname Fu had moved away. They seemed to sense the imminent danger. “They sure run fast. I was planning to lock them inside the ghost tattoo.”

There were only some small fries left. Han Fei fed them to Xiao Yu’s mother and the black taxi. Xiao Yu’s mother consumed a lot of ghosts and had evolved into a Lingering Spirit. Actually, Xiao Yu’s mother was very similar to Yan Yue’s mother but they had a different understanding of protection, so their ending was different.

Building One and Building Two...

When Han Fei walked to Building Four, the cat in his backpack hissed. The red string also tightened. "It looks like a scary existence is presiding here." Han Fei didn't forget the many things that happened when he last visited Happiness Neighborhood. The dark corners were hiding scary monsters made from despair.

"Last time, I was concerned about Xu Qin and hurried to find her. Do you think you can scare me off?" Han Fei held Rest in Peace and entered Building Four. Xiao Yu, Yan Yue and the other players followed him. The corridor was dark. Light twisted in this space. The smell of burning lingered in the air. Many burnt yellow papers were scattered on the ground.

"These are not paper money. They are talismans." Brain picked up one of them to study, "Take a look at the pattern on it. Doesn't it look like the pattern weaved from the dead's hair at the hospital?"

"Will these talismans really work on ghosts?"

"I don't think so. Or else they wouldn't be burned off like this." Brain tossed the paper away and looked down the corridor. "Dream's ritual appears to be different at every location. He turned Yan Yue's into vessel to obtain the maze map, he turned Fu Sheng into his vessel because he was chosen by the other managers. I wonder what is he after in this building."

"Every building here corresponds to an orphan. The building number is the orphan number. Dream is probably after Orphan Four." Yan Yue's mother frowned. "There is a presence here that makes me uncomfortable." Xiao Yu's mother sensed it too. She hissed to warn Han Fei.

"It's a presence that every ghosts dislike." Han Fei held the red string tightly and walked ahead. There was no one living on the first floor. The second floor was empty too. When he reached the third floor, he saw an old lady kneeling in the middle of the corridor.

"Is it a living person?"

The granny looked around 80. Her body was curled up, and she knelt in the corridor.

"Granny, do you need me to call an ambulance for you?" Xiao Jia took out his phone to record as he approached the old lady. The thin old lady appeared to have a weak hearing. She mumbled something

and didn't respond to outside stimuli. Xiao Jia walked over with hesitation. Just as he was about to touch the old lady, the old lady suddenly raised her hands to grab Xiao Jia's shoulders. "Don't block the way! You've blocked the Demon God's path!"

A scary face was hidden under the unkempt hair. Her face was covered in sutras. She seemed to be biting on a piece of bone in her mouth.

"Granny, did something happen to your family?" Han Fei thought the old lady was special. Everyone had left, but she stayed.

"Move! Don't stop the path of the Demon God!" The old lady was agitated. She picked up the ash from the urn to pelt them.

"Calm down. From the way you act, it looks like someone in your home is possessed. I am born with spirituality, so I know a thing or two about these things." When Han Fei said these things, his presence changed. His acting was very natural. As the old lady's attitude softened, Han Fei took out the items for resurrection from his backpack. "If you don't mind, I can help you take a look."

The two looked at each other. The old lady let go of Xiao Jia and climbed up from the ground. "My grandson is possessed by something. I want to chase that thing out of his body."

"Can you bring me to see him?"

"Yes. But only you can enter the house." The old lady shuddered as she went up the stairs. Han Fei signaled for the others to stay. The more he ascended, the thicker the oppression. Yellow talismans could be seen anywhere. Copper bells were strung on the banister, and urns were placed at every corner.

"Did you prepare all these?"

"Yes." The old lady said. "When you see my grandson, don't be too shocked. He's still a human. He is merely possessed."

The old lady's reminder made Han Fei nervous. "You mean he doesn't look like humans anymore?"

The wind blew, and the talismans fell to the ground. The old lady didn't say anything and led Han Fei to the fourth floor.

They didn't move much, but it felt like they had migrated to another world.

Chapter 697: No. 4

697 No. 4

"Are you ready?" The old lady held the doorknob. The words on her face trembled as she did. "No matter what you see, I hope you can remain calm. Remember, do not show fear to him."

The old grille slowly opened. The room was dark. It was unlike an apartment for the living but a lair for a monster.

"Do not step on the things on the ground. It took me a lot of effort to beg for these talismans." The old lady kept her head lowered. Ever since she entered the room, she deliberately fixed her gaze on the floor lest she accidentally met something's gaze.

"If they are useful, you wouldn't have to worry so much." Han Fei grabbed the hilt of Rest in Peace. His palm started to sweat. The atmosphere was strange.

"Shush. The Demon Gods can hear you. You can not believe them, but you can't disrespect them." The old lady waved urgently at Han Fei and said sternly. She carefully moved through the living room and pulled off the paper rope made from talismans. She glanced at the innermost bedroom. The door covered in yellow talismans was closed. Five bowls were placed before the door. They contained paper human limbs and a head. The old lady slowly retreated when she saw the things inside the five bowls.

"What's wrong?" Han Fei was confused.

"He hasn't had his fill. We shan't disturb him." The old lady mumbled nervously.

“Are these the things you normally feed him? Where is the nutrition without vegetables and meat?” Han Fei thought the old lady was possessed too. Even if the boy had been possessed, he needed a normal diet.

“The bowls contain ashes and medicine from senseis.”

“Wonderful. It’s really thanks to the ghosts that your grandson is still alive.” Han Fei shook his head. After regaining his memory, he was certain of one thing. Under most situations, only ghosts could deal with ghosts. He didn’t believe in senseis and the like. He wanted to ask the old lady to ask the sensei over so they could talk about this in detail.

“The ‘human’ in the bowl is food for the thing on him. Only when that thing is fed and asleep that my grandson can temporarily return to normal.” The old lady didn’t want Han Fei to get too close. He pulled Han Fei to the couch. “We’ll wait for a moment. That thing will sleep around noon.”

“Granny, how are you so sure that your grandson is possessed? Have you seen it?”

“If he’s not possessed, why would a child do something like that?” The old lady had Han Fei intrigued.

“What did he do?”

“I can’t remember when it started. The child had tried more than once to kill the people inside this room, including his parents and me.” Once the old lady spoke, the talismans in the room fluttered. They rustled noisily. “When you were asleep at night, there’d be this strange feeling. You open your eyes, and the child will be squatting beside your bed. His face would be close to your face, his eyes looking right at you.

“When you ask him what he’s doing, he doesn’t say anything. He will only smile. The child likes to smile, but it’s wrong to say that he’s a smiling dummy. When he was young, he could recognize many insects and animals. He even once dissected an insect using a plastic knife that came with a cake. These were relatively normal, but his actions became more... inexplicable.” The old lady glanced at the room and only sighed in relief when she saw that the bowls and chopsticks hadn’t moved.

“But there has to be a reason why he suddenly changed, right?” Han Fei studied the old lady’s expression. He wanted to know why Dream chose No. 4.

“Actually, this is my fault.” The old lady continued, “My son is a bastard. He was spoiled since he was young. He had a bad temper. He isn’t good at anything, but he’s an addicted gambler. He met my daughter-in-law at the casino. When you hear them arguing, you’d think my grandson isn’t his biological son.

“Parents rarely blame the children when they are arguing, but both of them treat the child as an argument device. My son would hit my grandson for no reason. The mother didn’t stop him. Sometimes, when she was beaten, she would beat her son.

“At first, my grandson didn’t do anything. He smiled and cried. When he was older, he would mumble some strange curses at his parents. No one knew what he meant and what the purpose was. In any case, whenever he did that, his parents would beat him harder.

“Everything changed when he was five. My bastard son purposely dropped my grandson somewhere far away. He wanted to abandon him, but the child would always find his way home.

“But every time he returned, he would carry something extra on him. He would talk in voices that didn’t belong to him. He would hide in the corners at night.

“Seeing his son like this, my son became even more enraged. He whipped him with his belt. About one week later, my son and daughter-in-law were asleep when they heard movement beside their bed. He opened his eyes and saw their son standing beside their bed with a knife.

“My bastard son was afraid for the first time. He had taught his son the worst thing in life, and my grandson picked it up very quickly. After that, my son kept feeling that my grandson wanted to kill him. Without letting me know, he sold his biological son to a private orphanage.”

At this point, Han Fei frowned. Most of the children at the orphanage were orphanage. But No. 4 was sent there by his biological parents. It was also his biological parents who ruined his life.

“What happened after that?”

“The private orphanage found a few families for my grandson, but in the end, they sent him back.” The old lady thought the orphanage wanted the child to be with his family, but Han Fei knew the truth. The orphanage didn’t really care about No. 4’s well-being. They wanted to send the child into deeper despair, and the best solution was to send him back home. The orphanage looked like they had done something, but they only made things worse.

“Can I see the child’s parents?” Han Fei wanted to teach them how to be a parent.

The old lady’s lips pursed. After a long time, she said, “My son was killed by the thing inside my grandson. He bit him to death. Tell me, how would a human do that? It’s the thing inside my grandson!” The old lady was loud. She wasn’t willing to accept this truth, so she insisted that her grandson was possessed.

“What about the son’s mother?” Han Fei’s red strings surfaced with curses. He didn’t communicate with Xu Qin, but Xu Qin felt the danger and grabbed Han Fei’s hand.

“That woman? She was around a few days ago, but she suddenly disappeared. I can’t remember where she is. But she should be in this house somewhere.” When the old lady said that, strange voices came from three different bedrooms. It sounded like nails scratching on the doors.

“Three bedrooms and one mother?”

The mutation started. The talismans on the innermost bedroom started to bleed. The door trembled. The head inside one of the bowls fell to the ground. The layer of glue around it burst, and strands of black hair oozed out.

Chapter 698: No.4'S Nightmare

698 No.4's Nightmare

Everything happened too quickly. Before Han Fei and the old lady were ready, the room darkened. They held their breath and looked at the rolling head inside the bowl before the bedroom door.

“I think I’ve found the child’s mother...” When Han Fei turned around, the old lady was kneeling on the ground. She put her hands together and prayed at the door. She prayed that the thing would leave her grandson’s body.

The eeriness of the room and the prayers of the old lady formed a special power that wanted to drag everything into the unknown darkness. The talismans on the door fell. Suddenly, the shaking door returned to normal. The metallic doorknob eased downwards, and the door opened.

Han Fei’s eyes were fixed on the gap. His heart, covered in names, jumped. He felt compelled by something to move forward. Intense pain came from the back of his mind. The memory fragments in his mind collided. The fear of death surfaced. He could hear his heart pounding clearly in his ears. Han Fei’s eyes were drawn by the darkness behind the door. His soul was like a train charging towards the death abyss.

“Who is behind the door?”

The head covered in glue was knocked into the wall. The talismans close to it fell, revealing a simple painting behind it. A colorful boy was playing in the painting. He was despised by his mother and beaten by his father. He ran everywhere, chasing after bloody friends. He ran and jumped. When he was tired, he hugged his friends and shared fairy tales. More paintings under the talismans were revealed. They were cute, colorful, and humorous. The child in the paintings kept running. He frolicked with his bloody friends, playing hide and seek. This home was his theme park, a theme park filled with grayness, violence, and grotesque. Underneath the coat of innocence was a twisted childhood.

The temperature dropped. The child in the paintings ran faster. He was inviting Han Fei to play with him inside the room.

Curses crawled all over his palm. The sting of pain reminded Han Fei. When he snapped to attention, he was already before the bedroom door. “I haven’t been charmed like this for a long time already...” It was hard to shake Han Fei’s conviction. He couldn’t tell what had happened earlier.

The painted childhood memories on the wall formed a great contrast to the creepy items inside the room. The child inside the paintings welcomed his arrival. The strange figurines inside the room blinked their eyes when Han Fei turned around. The painting represented the reality that he saw as well as the mental landscape he lived in. The divine figurines were severe and oppressive. They were the heavy reality in the adult’s eyes. They oppress and restrain him.

Han Fei's Adam Apple bobbed. Various sounds appeared in his ears. It sounded like people chanting or singing some strange song.

The old lady, whose face was covered in sutra, knelt in the living room. She mumbled things that no one could understand. She was only a few steps away from Han Fei, but it felt like she was worlds away.

"It feels like I can't return anymore."

The darkness behind the door possessed some kind of mysterious power. It was like a hand that could grab and pull a person into the darkness. The former No. 4 was probably slowly ruined like this. He was slowly consumed by the darkness until he couldn't leave it anymore.

When Han Fei first entered this building, he didn't think he'd run into something so dangerous. After all, Building 4 was only so big. It was unlikely to inhabit as many ghosts and monsters as the plastic surgery hospital, but Han Fei was proven wrong.

For a young child, a room could be a world he couldn't leave, an object could evoke his fear, and a dresser could bring him suffocating despair.

Holding the doorknob, Han Fei pushed the door open. The bedroom behind the door was filled with colorful paintings. They represented a child's nightmare and despair.

Despair became a singing elf. His father's belt grew with monstrous eyes. His mother's makeup became precious human organs that would shatter with a touch. Every tile was written with questions and options. One had to be careful moving inside the room. Stepping on the wrong option would bring punishment. The heavy curtains appeared to be lined with lead. A normal person couldn't open or close it. The bed grew with black briar. Dead bugs hid under the bed. A giant puppet was currently lying on the bed, pretending to be asleep. She had very long hair and giant eyes made from buttons. However, since her shoulders and head were sewn together, she couldn't look down and notice the child who needed her protection.

The doll was painted with various kinds of cheap makeup. She had a fragrant shell but the broken seams of her body showed the rotting dead animals inside.

There was a tingling sound, and the child's little theme park started operation. The paintings on the wall came alive. The child played with other bloody children until the doorbell rang. Han Fei glanced behind him. The whole house had changed. The house of figurines and talismans had disappeared. The living room became just like the bedroom. Han Fei had sunken inside No. 4's nightmare.

The cat under the bed was in the midst of labor. She mewled loudly. The lizards crawled out of the wall. They kept looking around but did nothing. The doorbell outside the door became more insistent. The person was losing patience. He slammed angrily at the door. The metallic door trembled.

"The doll represents the mother. Does the person outside the door represent the father?"

The birthing cat and the peeping lizards were the distant neighbors. The child saw everything differently, but they were also connected to real life. The agitated knocking continued for a long time before the metallic door opened. The leather shoes stepped on the ground. The heavy plodding was scary. Han Fei turned to look at the living room as a giant shadow poured in from the door. No. 4's father had arrived. It represented darkness and oppression. It was a shadow that dominated No. 4's heart.

The giant body brushed against the colorful paintings on the wall. Han Fei reacted quickly. He pulled on the red strings, but he realized the red strings were gone. He was touching a child's icy fingers instead. Han Fei looked at his arms in shock. He had turned into a child wearing tattered clothes. He radiated this horrible smell that reminded Han Fei of festering old wounds.

The door slammed shut. Han Fei had no idea when he fell for the illusion. He saw a middle-aged man reeking of a horrible stench walk out of the shadow. His eyes were always red. There was no trace of love on his face. After removing the shirt that was stained with vomit, the man's body almost melted into the shadow. He walked toward Han Fei and then strangled Han Fei's neck.

At that moment, Han Fei really felt the threat of death. However, the man soon spotted the brand new organs on the doll's table. He slammed Han Fei heavily to the ground. He grabbed the table with both of his hands and flipped it over. The organs screamed in pain, but the strange thing was the scream came from the voice of another man. Hearing the scream, No. 4's father became even more enraged. He stomped on the organs and grabbed a few to stuff them inside the doll's body. The doll with the long hair waved her hands and tried to resist, but her strength was no match to the man. She wanted to scream, but as a doll, she had no mouth. The man tore open the doll's stomach. He stuffed the broken organs into her stomach. He was not yet satisfied, so he stuffed his head into the doll's body and chewed on her insides.

Han Fei didn't dare to imagine the meaning of these scenes. He slunk to the kitchen. No. 4 had already given him the answer as to what to do at the start.

Many tragedies happened at the corner where no one was paying attention. Unfortunately, the past couldn't be changed. Han Fei only wanted to stop the tragedy from repeating in the future. Han Fei's tiny body picked up the blade in the kitchen and walked back to the bedroom door.

The doll's stomach was torn open. The shredded fabric fell on the animal carcasses. She raised her hands to strangle the shadow's neck, but it was to no avail. Han Fei slowed down and moved as quietly as possible. As a butcher who killed butchers, Han Fei knew how to deliver a fatal blow. However, No. 4 didn't know that. He might have practiced again and again every night. After multiple hesitations and trials, he finally became a monster!

Han Fei found the perfect angle, leaned on his body weight, and pushed the blade in!

"The old lady said that her son was bitten to death by No. 4. I'm probably doing the things that he didn't dare to do but wanted to." Han Fei, with incomplete memory, made a choice in this bizarre nightmare. He didn't feel too good inside, but this should be the fastest way to end this nightmare. The horror of this place was hard to describe. A normal player would have collapsed by now, but Han Fei had been through the trials of the cryptic world. He easily adopted the perspective of the child and completed the things that he didn't. The father was stabbed. His rotten heart and the shadow around him rapidly shrunk. The black blood splattered all over the doll and Han Fei.

Han Fei didn't stop. He wanted to remove the knife to cut off the monster's head, but the angered man didn't give him a chance. The sharp fingers pierced through Han Fei's skin. A normal child would be scared witless, but Han Fei was completely in No. 4's character. He reacted like an animal and jumped to bite the man's neck. Facing real despair, the man hesitated. He reacted just like he did in real life. He was frightened, and Han Fei bit his neck. No matter how hard he punched and pulled, Han Fei didn't let go. This was because Han Fei knew this was his only chance.

No. 4's nightmare was to make everyone experience his pain and despair and then sink into this place. Han Fei used No. 4's real-life solution to fight back. More wounds appeared on his body. The beating, whipping, and burning, he had endured everything until the shadow on the man faded away. Before No. 4 bit the man to death, No. 4 always lived in the shadows of fear. After he bit through that terror, he walked to the path of the other extreme and became a symbol of death and misfortune among the 31

orphans. The black blood flowed into his mouth and drenched his clothes. When the man was too weak to stand up, Han Fei stepped on his step.

The doll threw various objects at Han Fei. Her disgust and fear were palpable even without words.

“It’s your turn...” The wounded Han Fei took out the knife and walked toward the doll. He had a moment’s hesitation, but his rationality told him to make the second choice. Han Fei had no idea what kind of memory Mad Laughter had taken from him, but his instinct told him that he wouldn’t make this choice in the past.

Han Fei stepped over the black blood and pierced the knife at the doll’s face. Suddenly, the thick curtains in the bedroom fell to the ground. Dust rose. Red moonlight shone on Han Fei. He stopped moving and looked towards the window. There was a giant red eye outside the window. It was like there was a monster as tall as the apartment staring at Han Fei.

Han Fei had a sense of déjà vu. Before he could react, he heard the glass shatter. A wounded arm reached into the room and pressed at Han Fei’s head.

“So you haven’t let go of your mother.”

The fingers phased into Han Fei’s brain. Nothing could stop it. Every memory it touched was shattered. However, just as the fingers were about to squish Han Fei’s consciousness, they touched a small piece of fragmented memory. The memory contained a group picture of 30 orphans. The picture was given to Han Fei by the painter at Midnight Mall. It was also Han Fei’s first Level D Cursed Object. The giant fingers stopped above the picture. It seemed to be caressing the children’s faces.

The bloodshot eye blinked, and the nightmare that entrapped Han Fei shattered. At the same time, thousands of curses crawled over Han Fei to protect him. Han Fei’s sight returned to normal. He had escaped from No. 4’s nightmare. He was still standing before the bedroom door.

“Why... do you have our picture?”

A child’s voice came from inside the room. His tone was very gentle.

Chapter 699: The Next Ritual

“Our picture?” Han Fei, who came out of the nightmare, was covered in curses. He pushed the door open.

A horrible stink wafted out of the room. The small room was filled with colorful paintings. In the middle of the paintings was a chained young man. He held a broken finger and dabbed it with paints.

“No. 4?” The boy was wearing the uniform of the orphanage. However, it had been severely damaged that the number on the boy’s back was blurred.

“Why do you have our picture?” The boy didn’t lift his head and continued to paint on the ground. He was painting another boy. The boy imagined various kinds of death, but he didn’t harm anyone. He was using this method to control his urges.

“I also came from that orphanage like you.” At that moment, Han Fei’s backpack opened. The ugly kitten picked out a picture from within the pages of the script. The picture of the children was hidden inside the script. The present from the painter seemed to be meant for this moment.

Sensing something, the boy lifted his head to look at Han Fei. His bloody eyes blinked slowly. Then, he pounced at Han Fei like an angry leopard!

The chains tightened and cut into the flesh. The boy’s hands stopped before Han Fei’s eyes. He opened his mouth to reveal his broken teeth. His mother and grandmother clipped his fingers and pulled out his teeth to prevent him from hurting others.

“Don’t be so nervous. I can give it to you if you want to look at it.” Han Fei passed the picture to the boy. The boy held it with both hands. His face slowly returned to normal, just like a child who had finally found safe haven. The blood scab on his eyes fell, and some rationality returned to his eyes.

“When you entered Building 11, you should have seen the childhood memory of No. 11, right?” The boy’s voice was soft and gentle. It was completely different from how he acted earlier.

“Yes.” Han Fei didn’t deny it. He noticed that after the boy touched the picture, one of the children’s faces became clearer. The picture appeared to be the key to helping the orphans recover their memory.

“No. 11 and I died a long time ago. We were sent into the cryptic world’s theme park by Fu Tian. There, I think we met Fu Sheng, and he made us a part of the theme park.” After No. 4 touched the picture, he remembered many things. “This memory world belongs to Fu Sheng. Everything revolves around his memory and consciousness. Even though No. 11 and I have managed this place for years, nothing has changed... until your appearance. After multiple deaths, you’ve moved destiny, turning Happiness Neighborhood into a special place.”

“What do you mean?”

“This neighborhood is built based on your memory. As you died, you were assimilated further into Fu Sheng’s altar. Your memories combined with his. You started to lose yourself and became a part of this memory world. That part slowly formed this neighborhood.” No. 4 lay on the ground. “This whole world belongs to Fu Sheng, but this neighborhood belongs to the orphans. This is something you’ve fought for with 99 deaths. It is the biggest aid No. 11 and I can give you.”

Han Fei actively searched for death. While his memory was consumed by the memory world, he was also trying to impact and change this world. Fu Sheng wanted to be reborn in Han Fei’s body, and Han Fei wanted to climb on top of Fu Sheng’s altar to look further down the distance. Han Fei’s gamble paid off. Happiness Neighborhood was no longer a part of Fu Sheng’s memory but was changed by three children from the orphanage. This place contained Han Fei, No. 4 and No. 11’s memories.

“No wonder it feels so strange. This is Fu Sheng’s memory world. When Fu Sheng was young, I wasn’t even born yet, but this neighborhood has signs of my memory everywhere.” Han Fei started to understand it. “With your cooperation, the theme park has changed too.”

“No. The theme park will never change. The tragedies keep repeating themselves, but the children inside the theme park have changed. In the end, every one of us was pared down to a number. We’re merely a footnote in other people’s stories.” The boy’s voice was young, but he had a very mature tone.

“I still don’t quite get what you’re saying.” Han Fei held Rest in Peace. He didn’t have a deep impression of No. 4, but he knew he had a good relationship with the painter from the hospital.

“Initially, Happiness Neighborhood was used to cultivate orphans. Eleven apartments housed 11 different despairs. Even after so many years, Happiness Neighborhood is still used to cultivate despair. The children here have grown from eleven to thirty-one.” Blood leaked out of No. 4’s mouth, and the blood vessels in his eyes wiggled like worms. “This body is a transformation of my childhood memory. I didn’t expect Dream to come after you. You have to be careful of it! Dream, who was from the same period as Fu Sheng, is now an Unmentionable. He is the only ghost who has survived until now. It can impact Fu Sheng’s memory world through Fu Sheng’s memory of him. The eight resurrection rituals Dream has prepared for itself in this memory world have changed. Many rituals are different from before. I suspect his real target is you.”

“In other words, I not only have to be careful of Fu Sheng but also Dream?”

“That’s right. Dream was sealed inside this place by Fu Sheng. He swore to tear Fu Sheng’s soul apart and wipe away Fu Sheng’s existence.” No. 4’s young body started to crack. His stomach bulged. “My childhood memory is collapsing. When you enter the theme park, you need to find the real No. 11 and me.”

“How can I do that?”

“I am buried underground with children’s drawings painted on my body. No. 11 has disguised himself as a visitor. He will contact you.” The boy’s stomach rapidly expanded. He stared at Rest in Peace and jumped into it. “99 deaths. You’ve sacrificed everything to get this chance. I hope you’ll keep on your path and don’t walk the same path as Fu Sheng did.”

The blade glowed. Under the boy’s skin, a black cocoon with No. 4’s face showed. It fell out. The cocoon’s despair was stronger than any of the other cocoons. The monster inside was about to surface. The kitten planted its paw on the cocoon. It lowered its head. The nine ghost tattoos flared up and crawled into the cocoon and consumed the thing inside. As more cocoons were absorbed, the ghost tattoos became more alive. Something inside the ghost tattoo called out to Han Fei.

“I’ve already destroyed three of Dream’s rituals. I need to speed up. The longer I drag this out, the more people will die. Despair will spread, and the ghosts will get stronger.” Han Fei didn’t want to be a messiah, but it appeared like he was the only one who still cared about the lives of the common people in this city.

Han Fei pulled out Rest in Peace. The boy disappeared. The bedroom returned to normal. All the eerie feeling was gone. Han Fei walked out of the bedroom and found the old lady. He didn’t tell her that the

boy was dead. Instead, he told her that the boy was not in. Perhaps he had run away when she wasn't paying attention. It didn't matter if the old lady didn't believe him. No. 4 chose to run into Rest in Peace. Perhaps he understood his grandmother would only seek peace after he was gone.

The kitten that absorbed the cocoons became different from before. Its fur shone, and its eyes sharpened. It was no longer a weak stray but looked more like the demon's pet.

"Han Fei, did the old lady harm you?" Xiao Jia, who was downstairs, rushed over when he saw Han Fei.

"Building Four has been cleared. We need to clean up the other buildings." When they moved towards Building Five, Han Fei called Yan Yue and her father to his side. He studied them closely.

"What's wrong?" The previous Brain was confused. "Are we possessed?"

"I just think it's too coincidental for us to meet. It feels like some kind of power is guiding this." Han Fei didn't dwell too much on this. He turned to Yan Yue. "What is the next closest resurrection ritual?"

"Go west after you leave Happiness Neighborhood. There's a large lake there. The fourth ritual is at the lakeside. I believe it has to do with water ghost."

"Lake?" Han Fei didn't show much change to his expression, but he was considering many things.

By three 3 pm, Han Fei had cleaned out almost all the buildings at Happiness Neighborhood. The citizens who had been following him moved in. With Han Fei there, they felt less fearful. However, Han Fei was frowning deeply. He had yet to encounter monsters that were formed from pure despair. The sky darkened. Who knew when the sun would come up next? Happiness Neighborhood was shrouded in darkness. The citizens didn't dare to use the lights. They squeezed into a single building and made sure all the windows and doors were locked.

"We still lack manpower." Han Fei taught the players how to deal with ghosts and had Xiao Yu and her mother guard the apartment door. Since yesterday night, Xiao Yu's mother had consumed every ghost they had defeated. She was now a very scary Lingering Spirit.

“I’ll go to the western countryside. I’ll try to be back before midnight.”

Han Fei only brought Lee Guo Er, Yan Yue, and a player with him this time. The player was a former lifeguard and had high stamina. He should prove useful.

The lake mentioned by Yan Yue’s mother was not far from Happiness Neighborhood. The trip only took ten minutes. The strange thing was the black taxi moved away from the lake when they came close. The nine victims inside the taxi didn’t want to go close to the lake.

The sun fell. Darkness covered everyone’s eyes like a giant hand. The taxi’s lights were switched on. The taxi drove a few hundred meters to the lake and stopped by the end of the door. A neon sign sat by the roadside. There was a holiday vacation town by the lake, but the town was deserted.

“Is Dream’s fourth ritual held in this town or inside the lake?” Han Fei didn’t get down of the car. He looked around first.

“I don’t know. I only know it’s related to this lake.” Yan Yue’s mother controlled Yan Yue’s mother. Her lips moved and finally said. “Right. Dream gave this lake a very special name. It’s called Sea of Brain.”

“Sea of Brain?”

Han Fei grabbed his backpack and opened the car door.

“Lee Guo Er, you’ll stay in the car. The rest of you come with me.” Han Fei grabbed Yan Yue’s shoulders, and they moved forward together. The vacation town was quite small. There were only a few buildings. It felt like the builder vacated the place halfway through the project. “Spa hotel, fishing equipment rental center, boat rental center, tourist center, seafood restaurant...” Han Fei suddenly stopped moving. His nose twitched before he walked toward the boat rental center. “There’s a smell of blood coming from this place. The footprints on the ground are fresh too. The grass is stepped on. Someone was just here.”

Han Fei slowly approached and eased the door of the center open.

A plate filled with food fell to the ground. In the dark, a shadow opened the window and leaped out.

“Did you see that?” Han Fei was confused because the shadow didn’t have a human shape. He aimed his flashlight at the broken plate. It carried a piece of bloody, raw meat. It looked like it had just been torn out of an animal.

“The plate says that it’s from the seafood restaurant, but this meat is clearly from a large mammal.” Han Fei picked up the pieces of the plate. He looked out the window. There was no shoeprint where the shadow left, but there was a trail of something heavy being dragged.

“Isn’t there no living human in this town anymore?” Han Fei took the plate and jumped out the window. He followed the trail to the seafood restaurant’s backdoor.

“Be careful.” Han Fei held Rest in Peace and slowly pushed the door open. A horrible fishy smell hit them. Han Fei looked in.

There was an old lady in rubber shoes and a headscarf who sat before the giant freezer. She stood facing away from Han Fei, scraping the scales using a special knife in the dark.

The freezer had stopped working. The fish inside had gone rotten, but the old lady didn’t seem to notice it and kept working.

The scratches were consistent, and the fish scale flew everywhere.

Chapter 700: The Ritual

700 The Ritual

The old lady sat before the freezer alone and moved the knife expertly. The sound of the scales falling and the tune she was humming weaved together to form a sound that caused people to break out in goosebumps.

When Han Fei at the door coughed, the old lady stopped instantly, and the kitchen became so quiet. The hands covered in blood and scales reached around. The old lady pulled down the headscarf. She turned

to look at the backdoor fearfully after she had covered half of her face. Her eyes were like polished onyx.

“Are you here for dinner? I’m sorry, but the chef is not in. But I can cook something for you if you’re really that hungry.” The old lady sounded much younger than she looked. “Don’t worry. It’s on the house.”

Yan Yue and the player had no appetite after they sniffed the stench in the air, but Han Fei smiled, “Then, we’ll have to trouble you.” He was very gentlemanly and polite, a completely opposite version of his normal self.

“It’s no trouble. This small town is dependent on tourists. Helping you is helping ourselves.” The old lady appeared to have a hidden meaning in her words. When Han Fei wanted to read her expression, she swiftly turned around. She removed the apron covered in scales and tossed it inside the large sink beside her. She grabbed the knife meant for descaling into the room adjacent to the kitchen.

“Han Fei, are you sure you want to eat here?” The player was quite afraid. He knew how to rescue people from drowning, but he didn’t know how to save someone from the water ghost.

“It’s rare for us to meet a living person. We should take advantage of this to interview her.” After the old lady left, he walked towards the freezer and sink. He studied the scales on the ground. He picked one up. It was black and stuck with flesh. “Do you know what kind of fish will have this kind of scale?”

“I haven’t encountered a fish that has such a huge and sturdy scale. Could it be a large-boned snake fish?” The lifeguard frowned as he followed behind Han Fei. He covered his mouth and nose. His stomach turned. The place was very smelly.

“Take a look at the fish inside the freezer. Can you recognize any special species?” Han Fei told the lifeguard while he moved to stand beside the sink. When the old lady left, she did something casual yet deliberate. She removed her apron but didn’t hang it up. Instead, she tossed it into the sink. The apron floated on the large sink and covered up the things underneath the water.

“What are you looking at?”

“When we came in, the old lady was descaling a fish. But the fish is now gone. I suspect she wrapped the fish in the apron and threw it into the sink after she removed her apron.” Han Fei pointed out the elusive detail. He ignored Yan Yue, grabbed the hook, and tried to hook the apron out of the water. It was unclear what the sink, which was 2 meters wide and one meter long, was for. It was filled with dirty water that reeked.

“No matter this place is used for cleaning or rearing fish, it’s not going to be hygienic.” The lifeguard had finished inspecting the freezer. “They’re just some common fish inside the freezer.”

Han Fei didn’t respond. He stared at the sink. He simulated the old lady’s action in his mind. “If there were really a fish in the apron, then it would have fallen right here.” Han Fei rolled up his sleeve. With the lifeguard looking on in shock, he reached his hand under the water. Out of his expectation, the sink was actually very deep. Even when he reached fully down, he couldn’t touch the bottom. “How is it so deep?” Han Fei had to give up. However, when he tried to pull his hand out, his fingertip brushed against something slippery. It felt like descaled fish flesh. His fingers closed around the object. His expression changed when he realized he had grabbed not a fish but five fingers.

“It’s a person’s hand!”

The old lady had been working with a broken hand and not a fish? While he was pondering that, Han Fei felt a giant force pulling on his arm. It was like there was a big fish trying to pull him into the sink!

At the crucial moment, Han Fei kicked at the edge of the sink. The kitten in his backpack growled, and the ‘big fish’ finally let go. Water splashed everywhere. Han Fei’s face was about a foot from the murky water surface. He quickly pulled his arm out. Fish guts and blood slid down his arm. Han Fei studied his hand. There was a bite mark near his wrist. It was not a fish bite but a human tooth bite.

“Are there mutated bodies inside the sink?” Han Fei wanted to inspect this further when the old lady came out of the other room. The lifeguard cleverly moved to block her sight of Han Fei.

The old lady didn’t notice anything out of place. Then again, most of her head and face were covered by the scarf. Her expression was impossible to read. “This place is quite messy. You better go and wait in the dining room.” Her clothes reeked of fish like she hadn’t changed them for a long time already. Other than her eyes and hands, the old lady’s whole body was covered. Even her left wrist was bound with a bandage. It was hard to tell if she was trying to hide something or if she was injured.

“Thank you.” Han Fei and the lifeguard moved out of the kitchen. Yan Yue followed behind them. There was a long corridor between the dining room and the kitchen. The guests wouldn’t be able to see and smell the kitchen.

The seafood restaurant didn’t look abandoned. The tables, chairs, and bar were all clean. However, there were water droplets everywhere, like the guests here were constantly wet.

The place was clean. The décor was very unique. Many pictures hung on the wall. Most of them were the tourists at the lakeside with their big catches.

“Han Fei, look at this.” The tourist pointed at one of the pictures. “Why does this fish have a human face?” The closer the pictures were to the bar, the stranger the fish in the pictures looked. The pictures closest to the bar had already been removed. Only the frames remained.

Twenty minutes later, a faint fragrance came out of the dark corridor. The old lady came out carrying an iron basin.

“Sorry for the wait. I’m the only one here, so the work is slow.” The old lady placed the basin on the table. The fish was dyed red with chilies. It looked appetizing. The guests who didn’t witness the mess in the kitchen would have their stomachs grumbling. However, Han Fei’s group had no appetite.

“We don’t have any more rice or noodles. If this is not enough, I can make another body of fish for you.”

“Another body of fish?” Han Fei’s lips twitched. That was a strange way to describe fish. He felt like they were not talking about normal fish. The lifeguard and Yan Yue didn’t dare to move. Even the kitten kept shaking its head.

“Eat it while it’s hot. It’ll become fishy when it’s cold.” The old lady prepared to turn to the kitchen when she was reminded of something. She stopped and reminded them. “The sky is dark. You better don’t wander around the lake. It’s best to find a place in town to stay instead.”

“Is it dangerous by the lake? We plan to go night-fishing.” Han Fei said innocently. He looked like a fishing hobbyist.

“Don’t.” The old lady said sternly. “I don’t want to lie to you. The reason this town is abandoned halfway is because of the water monster inside the lake. A few people have gone missing there already.”

“Water monster?” The lifeguard wiped his sweat. He knew that Han Fei picked him because he was a good swimmer, but he really didn’t want to go into that lake. His heart pounded nervously.

“Originally, this town was quite lively. There were many fishing hobbyists. They were friendly with the workers who were hired to build the town. If they got any fish, they would bring them here. We didn’t charge them beyond the cooking fee. Everyone was having fun. The boss and investors were impressed too. However, everything changed one night.” The old lady reminded them kindly. She didn’t look like a bad person.

“What happened?” Han Fei’s group was intrigued.

“First, the people who went night-fishing disappeared. There were different testimonies. Some said the missing people got dragged into the lake by big fish. Others said, the fishers just wandered deeper into the lake and disappeared.

“Then, the builders started to suffer strange fates too. Some died in their sleep. They were lying in bed, but they died from drowning.

“Then, things got stranger. People who often ate the fish from the lake started to grow scales on their bodies. Those people would make strange noises at night. When people went to check in the morning, only some scales and flesh remained by their beds. The people had disappeared. Everyone suspected they had slithered into the lake.”

Only a small light was kept on inside the restaurant. The flickering light shone on the old lady’s covered face. It looked scary. “In any case, don’t go near the lake at night. Sleep well and leave when it’s morning.” “Thank you for the reminder.” Han Fei didn’t plan to let the old lady go just like that. JH noticed one detail. “You said everything changed one night. Do you still remember anything special that happened that night?”

Dream probably prepared his ritual by the lake that night.

“That night was the day we worshipped the Lake God. The lake was sealed up, and no fishing was allowed. Everyone who survived by the lake would come. We would pray for another safe and bountiful year. After midnight, the village elders would invite the Lake God figurine in the ancestral hall out. Then, they would nominate an orphan to bring three sacrifices to the island.”

“Island?” Han Fei blinked.

“There’s an island in the middle of the large lake. During the ceremony, an orphan who was raised by the townspeople would bring the sacrifices to the island. The biggest problem that year was on the orphan.” The old lady’s tone became agitated. “After the investors came, life in town became better. We no longer had any orphans, so the elders fetched an orphan from the orphanage. However, when the orphan took the boat to the island, the child fell into the lake with the Lake God figurine. Both of them haven’t been found to this day.”

“That’s not a good sign indeed.” The old lady had blamed everything on divine punishment. However, everything that went wrong that night probably had to do with Dream. “Is there anything we can do to rectify this?”

“No clue. Even now, we can’t tell if it’s a Lake God or a Lake Ghost living in the lake.” The old lady shook her head. “If you’re interested in these things, you can visit the boat rental center in the morning. The boss there grew up by the lake. He was specifically hired by the vacation town’s boss.”

“Okay. Thank you.”

At that moment, there was a crashing sound from the kitchen. It sounded like a door had been opened. The old lady panicked. “Remember. Do not go near the lake at night. Stay in your room. Also, the most important thing is, do not fall asleep.”

The old lady then rushed to the kitchen. In her hurry, she bumped against the bar counter. The bandage around her left wrist unwounded slightly to reveal the bloody flesh underneath.

“That’s some fresh meat. It looks like descaled fish.”

Han Fei's eyes glowed. He turned to look at Yan Yue. "Dream's ritual is beside the lake. This lake is called the Sea of Brain. The old lady told us not to sleep at night. These three seem to be related."

"The later it is, the greater the chance of Dream's resurrection. Are we making the move tonight?" Yan Yue's mother was anxious. She didn't like Dream, but she didn't like Han Fei either.

"Of course." Han Fei took out a paper note and placed it on the table. He picked up his backpack and walked toward the boat rental center. The center was the building closest to the lake inside the town. Han Fei's group examined every room before they gathered in the boss' private bedroom. The room reeked of fish. Several rotten water weeds were scattered near the walls. Large spots of blood and water dirtied the bed. There were thin scales as well.

"It has left not too long ago."

Han Fei searched the room. When he turned up the bedframe, he noticed a strange figurine that was hidden underneath.